

DISCUSSION BULLETIN

NUMBER 36

JULY 1989

Published by the Discussion Bulletin Committee

Address all correspondence to
DISCUSSION BULLETIN, P.O. Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501

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BULLETIN MATTERS

This issue begins by devoting six pages to an "International Proposal" from groups in Argentina and Uruguay. It appears to fall within the bounds of non-market socialism despite what appear to be some Leninist language and concepts. The proposal is truly 'international' since we received our copy from Kamunist Kranti in India, which in turn reprinted it from an English translation published in Great Britain. I hope the typeface, already small, does not become



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microscopic when it reduced in size for the DB. For a clear copy and information on how to reach the South American groups that produced it, readers should write to Kamunist Kranti enclosing a dollar or two.

Next are letters responding to matters in DB35, including John Crump's article and especially Mike Kolhoff's proposal for an American federation of anarchists. This latter produced some rather intense letters and articles. We end with a couple of reviews. In one of these Bob Jones reviews a recent biography of Guy Aldred, whose efforts between World Wars I and II kept alive the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation (APCF), a major grouping of non-market socialists in Great Britain during this period. We hope to begin serializing Comrade Jones's historical study of the APCF in an upcoming issue. In addition we have a rather lengthy list of "Publications Received."

DB36 is the last issue of our sixth year of publication. We lost a couple of months during our first year or so, but have maintained a bimonthly schedule since then. With DB37 we hope to begin using a desktop computer publishing program that will give us a new masthead, front page format, and perhaps a set paragraph that will explain to new readers the purpose of the DB.

As ever we call for your articles, letters, and reviews. Until we can find a fast typist who will operate the desktop publishing program free, we will have to paste up your articles as received. Please single-space them and use a narrow--three quarter-inch--margin and a dark ribbon.

Frank Girard
for the DB Committee

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

"An Appeal to North American Stevedores" and "An Early Warning System to Spanish Dockers" are the titles of two leaflets received here recently. The former describes attacks on British dockworkers' job security and pay, pointing out its probable use by companies in North America if successful in Britain and calling for a "boycott of all cargo/container shipping from the U.K." The other is a similar call addressed to Spanish dockworkers. Both were written in Britain. Readers who can get these into the hands of dockworkers in North America and in Spain can obtain copies from Samisdat Press, Box 1255, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028.

Looking for a Decent Union? What the IWW Offers You and The Power of Property: How Private Should Property Be? are two of a series of six propaganda brochures published by the Vancouver, B.C., IWW. The former is a twelve-page recruiting brochure pointing out the practical advantages and strategies of organizing in the IWW. The latter, a four-page leaflet, discusses the power of capital in the state and workplace, contrasting it with the weakness of the working class under present circumstances. It calls for discussion of the problem and ways to solve it. These two are currently in stock in a revised version. Four other titles--Lost Time, Stolen Labor, Abolition of the

(Cont'd on p. 22)

FOR · DISCUSSION

INTERNATIONAL PROPOSAL
TO THE PARTISANS OF THE
WORLD PROLETARIAN
REVOLUTION

On February 22 and 23 1986, a group of militants from certain countries (especially Argentina and Uruguay) met in Uruguay to discuss the present world situation and the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat.

There was a general agreement between them that in the face of the world-wide attacks of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat and the present state of weakness, dispersion and isolation of the small revolutionary class forces, it is necessary to work together to reverse this situation in combatting the sectarianism and nationalism which is implicit in certain conceptions of international work. In an attempt to change this situation, the comrades present put forward the following ideas and propositions.

SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS AND FUNDAMENTALS

It might seem strange that here, some groups and a small number of militants, who are certainly generally unknown, suddenly launch an appeal, a proposition to all those who throughout the world uphold with greater or lesser strength, with greater or lesser clarity, the flag of proletarian internationalism, of the world proletarian revolution.

But it's not just "here" or "all of a sudden" that once again the anguished cry of revolutionary minorities is raised, trying to break the chains imposed by capital, helplessly witnessing the terrifying blows which the bourgeoisie inflicts on the proletariat and themselves. Whether in periods of rising class struggle or the most violent moments of counter-revolution, these revolutionary minorities discover, one by one, the meaning of isolation, the weakness of their small forces. A weakness which is not only numerical but fundamentally political, since it is impossible to resolve locally or nationally the problems with which revolutionaries are presently posed.

We are convinced that in different places groups are arising which don't identify with the traditional left (Stalinist, Trotskyist and their different varieties), with politics aimed at helping the bourgeoisie to solve its problems, with the position of changing the

state form of bourgeois domination or supporting its wars, but who instead try to elaborate a distinctive politics calling for the autonomy of the working class against the bourgeoisie and the struggle to destroy its domination and its state without preliminary (democratic) phases or stages. And we know what it means to swim against the current, without being able to count on any help, without the immediate possibility of reappropriating the historical experience of the revolutionary proletariat, without fundamental theoretical-political texts, and in a dangerous atmosphere of repression.

If, for some, certain definitions or positions are "ABC" which we don't write or talk about sufficiently clearly, for each of us to be able to describe the struggle requires a long process of struggles, of ruptures, of fear and uncertainties.

In the schools here they teach us a saying of a famous man of the last century : "ideas cannot be killed." However, we have learnt that one kills those who have certain ideas (or positions) and that the dominant class can over a long period prevent the re-appropriation, the awareness of, the link with and the development of experience, of ideas and positions which the revolutionary proletariat lives and builds up in different parts of the world. Thus, paradoxically, it took a monstrous repression (with a subsequent state of exile) and the (Falklands) war to make known here the existence of diverse radical currents and groups throughout the world. To make known—and that still little enough—the experience of Germany and elsewhere after World War One. To get to know other positions in the Spanish Civil War, which were neither Francoist nor Republican. And there is another history closer to us (which we hardly know at all).

Departing from this we have had confirmation that groups currently exist which don't belong to the 'traditional' political currents, many of whom we didn't know before, and others of whom we don't know when and how they broke with capital and its fractions, but which express to different degrees different moments of rupture with the politics of capital.

But if today we are aware that they exist, this doesn't mean that the present situation of isolation and of weakness has changed. On the contrary, we don't even hear enough about what's going on, not only in far away countries, but not even in a nearby city or

a neighbouring quarter. And this shouldn't be understood as a curiosity or as a journalistic question: in Argentina for example, there are continually days when several million workers are in struggle without there being any coordination between them, so they sometimes don't even know that there is a struggle which is going on everywhere. And if this is the case for relatively massive movements, it's even worse with the contact and the awareness of the existence of avantgardes appearing during these struggles or under their influence.

And we are convinced that in the countries we live in, as elsewhere in the world, groups of workers and militants are being thrown up, trying to break with the politics of conciliation, of subordination to the bourgeoisie, but which, in the absence of an international reference, and with the strong presence of the bourgeoisie in the workers' movement, end up being absorbed by some fraction of capital or simply disintegrating, disappearing.

Few are those who manage to survive the first blows, and those who do so have an uncertain perspective or political isolation ahead of them. Having surmounted different stages and having to double back, they find themselves in an impasse, starting from scratch on new subjects. Something which is transformed into a daily reality, a helplessness which saps those limited forces which already have been politically and economically hammered. Isn't there an alternative to this? Must the preparation of a revolutionary internationalist politics, or at least an attempt at it, proceed step by step, group by group, city by city, nation by nation, generation by generation? Does each one have to go through the same stages, confront the same problems, receive the same blows, decipher the same letters, elaborate the same words, in order after some time and a long hard road, having become strong and "party-like", to join up with ones "equals", or, in their absence, to "spread" to other nations?

We don't believe that this is the only option. We don't even believe that this can lead to anything positive.

On the contrary, we think that the only alternative we must work towards is the international one. Just as it's a mystification to talk about a communist society as long as there still exists even one capitalist country, the same goes for talking about inter-

nationalism if it is only conceived of as solidarity with workers' struggles throughout the world or as pompous phrases now and again against war, militarism or imperialism.

For us, proletarian internationalism has a different meaning, and implies making the effort to go beyond general solidarity, since the international dimensions of the proletarian revolution demand the interaction and unification of efforts to work out a unique strategy at the world level and its political corollary in the tasks confronting us in the different zones and countries.

Naturally this can't be resolved through voluntarism or from one day to the next. It will not be the fruit of a long, prolonged "educational" or "scientific" work such as was conceived by the Second International (and not only it), through an "accumulation of forces" ("winning militants one by one" and "elaborating THE theory" and structuring THE leadership which will be recognised when its time comes) for a far distant future confrontation, whereas every day we see the resistance and the struggle of the proletariat against capital (which in reality, for these "political currents", must be controlled, covered, isolated in such a way that they are adapted for the incessant "task" of supporting some fraction of the bourgeoisie against another, supposedly worse one).

If the party of the working class is not one of these political groups calling itself such in one or more countries, if one can't agree with "the party for the working class" and the call for "the working class organised as a class, in other words as a party", this is not a simple game of words. If we reject the social-democratic ideas (Stalinists, Trotskyists etc) of the party as an apparatus (intellectuals, workers, etc) carrying the truth, which voluntarily constitutes itself within one nation and awaits recognition from the uncultivated masses, and the international as a federation of parties (or a party which spreads to other nations), this implies a break with these conceptions and practices which are totally opposed to proletarian internationalism and which in fact are just a way of manifesting and defending nationalist ideas.

Among the latter, the most evident is that which conceives of the development of its own group (or their own groups) as a local or national question, with the aim of developing a decisive force for later on, which dedicates itself to making contacts with other

groups in other countries in order to absorb them or generally expose them through discussions and declarations.

The international contacts are considered as "private property", with a bilateral practice predominating, something which can include periods of 'getting together' over so many years, finally coming together in the "United Nations" of "Revolutionaries." The practice of the Second International is a good example of this. We consider that this path can only lead to new frustrations and new mystifications, which is why it is necessary to struggle against all the interests, conceptions and the sectarianism which produce and reproduce the divisions created by the bourgeoisie in the defence of its internal markets, of its states, of "its" proletarians, in other words, of the surplus value it extracts.

ON CERTAIN ACCUSATIONS

We don't know if the above is sufficient to present this proposition and justify it, or if it requires greater development. However, we believe it necessary to add precisions regarding certain accusations.

To be sure, many will ask themselves : "With whom, to what point and how does one place oneself within a proletarian internationalist perspective ? How to determine this ? Who is to do so ?" It's evident that nobody would think of working with, or even making a leaflet with someone in the enemy camp. Regarding the class enemy there can be neither conciliation nor entrism. But not everybody is an enemy. It cannot be denied that among the groups and persons not belonging to the latter there is often intolerance, static visions and sectarianism. There is a practice of divergence, a dispute over "customers" in common, a nationalism and a "defence of ones own back garden" disguised as intransigence

We cannot escape this problem in an international proposition. It's natural that nobody would think of working in a common perspective with a group of the Fourth International or with a third world Maoist. But if the character of the enemy class is evident in certain cases, in others it's much more subtle, which makes it difficult to draw up a line of demarcation, all the more so when we are seeking to take a step forward in the present situation of weakness, isolation and dispersion.

We believe that it is impossible to elaborate an ensemble of "programmatic" points, which would only be the proof of opportunism, unless they are so worked out and profound that perhaps only the group itself could agree, if at all.

One shouldn't pretend either that groups and isolated individuals in each country of the world can ripen in the same way as in other zones or that we can take this or that definition which, as widespread as it may be in certain places, is not the product of a shared history, of which as we have already pointed out, little or nothing is known in other zones.

Conversely, the almost one year long strike of the British miners didn't give rise to any serious attempt at coordinating a common response of the different groups and militants scattered across the globe, something which points not only to a weakness and a hesitation, but to sectarianism, to conceptions of the class struggle and of the party like those of social democracy. And in the face of the Iran-Iraq war? And of South Africa and Bolivia and elsewhere where the proletariat in struggle has received the hardest blows? What reply, however minimal, has been attempted at the international level?

How to resolve this? How are the criteria for our recognition to be decided in order that from the outset the proposition to overcome the present situation isn't still-born (either being ambiguous enough to lead to a free for all, or else being so strict that the only ones 'admitted' are already working together?)

For us, the criteria for our recognition is in practice. And that's what the second part of the proposition deals with, even if the latter, no more than anything else, can evade the essential, unique "guarantee": the struggle.

INTERNATIONAL PROPOSITION

With the objective of:

- contributing to the modification of the present state of weakness of the tiny revolutionary and class forces scattered throughout the world, in order to raise its possibilities of action in the class struggle;
- consolidating and enlarging today's sporadic comings together, in the perspective of organising and centralising a proletarian internationalist tendency which exists today, with all its limits and errors, we propose the following:

1) A coordinated response in the face of certain attacks of capital (eg. on the question of the British miners, of the workers of South Africa, Iran-Iraq, etc) : joint leaflets and campaigns, political information, moments of practical relations and orientations affecting the world proletariat.

2) International Information :

a) about workers' struggles, in order to make propaganda as much as possible on the most important struggles taking place in each region or country in order to spread their echo and to reinforce the reality of proletarian internationalism and proletarian fraternity;

b) about different political groups, not only participants in the proposal, but also enemies, since this is a necessary element for the political struggle against them;

c) about historical experience, texts and documents produced in the long struggle of the proletariat against capital and all exploitation.

3) Theoretical-political polemic with a view towards taking up joint positions and as a contribution to the development of revolutionary politics.

For those who not only agree on a whole series of points but are in agreement on praxis, and who put forward all the points of this proposition, in particular point 1 (common action), it is vital to organise the discussion. And solely for those, we propose two things :

4) The international organisation of correspondence, implying the creation of a fluid network of exchange and of communication, which should be one of the material bases of point 7.

5) An International Review, which should not be conceived of as an ensemble of the political positions of the different groups brought together under a "collective" cover. On the contrary, it should be an instrument to consolidate the realised common activity, to propagate and argue shared positions and, to be sure, to develop the necessary public discussion on the vital questions concerning the tasks of the moment, the proposed activity and the "open" themes, given a common agreement on the necessity to include them.

6) To the degree that there is the necessary agreement, to stimulate the participation of other groups in the press and vice versa and the spreading of texts of intervening groups.

7) Move towards creating a common "internal" discussion: in other words, not limit oneself to the "official and public" polemic between groups, but also the discussion of communists in the face of "open" problems.

All the activities and all the decisions which the participating groups take will be through general agreement, in other words, unanimously.

TO WHOM DO WE MAKE THIS PROPOSITION ?

1. Anyone in the world waging struggle against the attacks of capital, against all imperialist or inter-bourgeois wars, against all bourgeois states (regardless of shade or colour) with the aim of the working class imposing its dictatorship against the bourgeoisie, its social system and all forms of exploitation.

2. All those who don't support any fraction of the bourgeoisie against another, but who struggle against them all. Those who don't defend inter-classist fronts, neither adhering to nor participating in them.

3. Those who practically accept that "the workers have no country," this fundamental phrase which doesn't just say that the workers can't defend what they don't have, but that they "can" and "must" intervene in the struggles and tasks posed in the different countries of the world, despite the fact that, from the bourgeois point of view, this would be considered as an interference and against "the right of nations to self-determination." A right which is called for each time the revolutionary proletariat or its avant garde reinforces its international links in the face of its class enemy, a right which is trampled on each time it comes to putting down and massacring revolutionary movements.

4. Precisely for this reason, those who fight against the politics of "defence of the national economy", of economic recovery, of "sacrifices to resolve crises"; to those who don't swallow the policies of expansion of their own bourgeoisie even when the latter is economically, politically or militarily attacked; to those who always struggle against the entire bourgeoisie, both local and foreign.

5. To those who combat the forces and the ideologies which set out to chain the proletarians to the economy and to the politics of the nation state, disarming them under the pretext of "realism" and the "lesser evil".
6. To those who don't propose to "recuperate" or "reconquer" the unions. On the contrary, to those who characterise the latter as instruments and institutions of the bourgeoisie and of its state. In no way can the unions defend to the end the immediate interests of the proletariat. In no way can they serve the revolutionary interests of the proletariat.
7. Those who agree that one of the tasks on this terrain is to battle to the end against the political line of class collaboration supported by the unions, and who contribute to making the rupture of the class from the unions irreversible.
8. To those who do all they can to contribute to reinforcing all the attempts at unification of the proletariat, in order to confront capital, even partially, all the attempts at extension, generalisation and deepening of the struggles of resistance against capital.
9. To those who defend the struggles against all varieties of capitalist repression, whether those exercised by the official (state) military forces of law and order, or that of its civilian colleagues of the left and right of capital. To those who, as best they can, collaborate with groups who suffer the blows of repression.
10. To those avant gardes who, in the struggle against the bourgeoisie and its state, pitilessly combat those who limit themselves to criticising one of the forms which the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie takes on (the most violent, military one in fact) and defend democracy or struggle for its development.
11. In this sense, in the face of the bourgeoisie's false alternative of fascism/anti-fascism, to those who denounce the bourgeois class character of anti-fascist fronts and of democracy, and pose the necessity of struggling for the destruction of the bourgeois state, in whatever form it presents itself, with the objective of abolishing the system of wage labour and the world-wide elimination of class society and all forms of exploitation.
12. To those for whom proletarian internationalism implies, first of all, the struggle against one's own bourgeoisie, revolutionary defeatism in case of any war which is not the class war of the

proletariat against the bourgeoisie and for the world proletarian revolution.

13. To those who, with whatever different theorisations on the party, agree on the fact that they are international from birth onwards, or they are nothing.

14. Finally, to those who, in accordance with their strength and their situation have defined their tasks against the bourgeoisie, oriented towards two fundamental aspects :

- a) push the development of the class autonomy of the proletariat;
- b) contribute to the construction and development of the politics of proletarian internationalism and the world party.

In other words, whereas the means, the tasks and priorities can be adapted in different ways depending on a given situation, all of this must be in relation to one sole perspective : the constitution of the working class as a world-wide force for the destruction of the capitalist system.

FINAL CLARIFICATION

We believe that the above formulations can and should be improved, corrected, completed. We aren't going to defend every last dot and comma of this Proposition, but its general sense.

In the first discussions we have had on the present situation and on how to begin to change it, there have been comrades who have expressed a certain pessimism on the reception it will receive and on the possibilities of its realisation. We believe that in the face of the terrible blows which the bourgeoisie delivers against a proletariat searching, sometimes desperately, to resolve its problems, in the face of the possibility (and the realities) of inter-bourgeois war, in the face of massacres of the workers, of children and the old, which are repeated in different parts of the world, and in the face of the ever growing mountain of tasks imposed on revolutionaries at present, the politics of the sect, of greediness, of "leaving things till later" and the implicit or explicit defence of the present "status quo" don't match up.

The recognition of the present situation should be translated through a political initiative capable of recuperating the lost ground and of overcoming grave weaknesses. In this sense, the common engagement must be the struggle for a radical change in the international relations between revolutionaries. In other words, going beyond a simple exchange of positions (sometimes not even

that) to a joint taking of positions in the face of the attack of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, to an indispensable coordination orienting the reflection and the debate on questions which consolidate the common perspective.

Among the objections which could be raised in relation to the viability of this proposition, are ones on how to concretise it.

Here we find in point 5, if one agrees with it at all, the means for studying how to organise its realisation. We don't pretend to give a reply here to each question and problem, but to manifest an engagement to struggle for its concretisation.

It is evident that the rapid execution of certain things requires physical meetings. We don't believe that this is absolutely necessary, that is to say, at present it seems to us to be very difficult to achieve, at least for those of us who live in this part of the world.

At present, we don't see the conditions allowing for the organisation of a really international meeting: a trip abroad is (economically) forbidden to us. A trip of 8,000km, the equivalent of more than 15 months wages (more than 20 if we take the minimum defined by the government). That's why we believe that to begin with the relations and discussions, at least between the non-Europeans and the Europeans, should be through correspondence. This will take more time and make the task more difficult, but it's not impossible, far from it (a letter from Europe, for example, if there isn't a strike, takes 15 to 20 days).

Security conditions (those who have confidence in legality are not only childish but a danger for revolutionaries) also pose obstacles, but they can and will be resolved.

Language also creates inconveniences. For our part, and up till now, the only one we have been able to write is Spanish. Some of us can read Italian, Portuguese, and English with difficulty. With a bit of imagination, someone might manage to understand a little French, but there is nothing to be done with German. The other languages "don't exist." Taking this into account, what's in Castilian won't have the same circulation and rapidity as the other languages in the established order.

To conclude, the initiative which we are presenting has been put forward in its fundamentals. Those who show an interest or agree with it, will receive a part entitled "More On Organisation".

In other words, how we see its realisation and concretisation.

We guarantee that all those who write to us will get a copy of all the replies received. The future organisation of the correspondence, discussions, etc., will be with those who agree and will depend on the way they agree among themselves.

For those who agree with the spirit of the proposition, we will ask them to spread it and to give us details (if possible with their address) of groups which have received this convocation.

—x—x—

**This proposal in Spanish has been made by Emancipacion Obrera, Argentina and Militancia Clasista Revolucionaria, Uruguay. We have taken the English translation for this reprinting from Communist Bulletin, England. We hope to publish its Hindi version soon.

We agree with the spirit of this proposal. And its major shortcoming in our opinion is the proposal's silence on THE BASIS of the "fundamentally political" weakness of revolutionary minorities today. The basis is the difficulties involved in UNDERSTANDING the essence and dynamics of capital—the other weaknesses being contributing factors (but they are not insignificant).

We are looking forward to comments and exchanges regarding this proposal with a view to taking steps to contribute to changing the present situation.

December 1987.

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203 Button St.
 Jersey City, N.J.
 May 24 1988

Dear readers, you paid homage to Louis Lazerus for being one of the most accomplished Marxist scholars. Although I don't match his achievement because of lack of ability and desire, I believe I am as aware of conditions in today's regulated capitalism as Marx was in the *laisé faire* days of the nineteenth century. Many reforms like social security, unemployment insurance, welfare, the federal reserve system and the United Nations have ~~not~~ convinced me that capitalism is ~~not~~ only a bridge between feudalism and socialism.

Such catch phrases as New Deal, New Society, New Frontier etc. have led people to believe that capitalism has found the secret of immortality. Since the great depression which ended with world war II, we have had so called recessions but no depression greater than the one that scarred the capitalist class out of its wits. The basic premise of Marx that the working class can't possibly consume the product of its labor is still valid but major gluts of unsold goods to cause a depression have been avoided. People today believe that so long as the arms race and the credit system is under control, industrial development and capitalism will continue. The decision of Red China and the Soviet Union to qualify for the credits and markets of the capitalist world is further proof that capitalism has more going for itself than ever - so they think.

Many knowledgeable people will not disagree when you tell that we are living in a fool's paradise or a house of cards. When the news media points out that the banking system is overextended with bad loans and loans that could become bad in a small or moderate recession and that major corporations are much in debt because of junk bonds they sold to make major acquisitions or to buy back their own stock to avoid being bought out, we realize that capitalism's leaders and regulators are getting us deeper in the hole in their attempt to make capitalism work. Such solutions to capitalism's problems make people with money rush to save their fortune ~~by~~ when they see a crisis coming by buying precious metals and collectables like coins, stamps and works of art in the hope that the crises will pass to another phase of the business cycle and they will show a profit. World and national business developments are vital to the rich and the poor but the working class has the unique ability to benefit from capitalist crises if everyone benefits greatly including rich people who have lost their capital. We socialists will get our act together soon I believe and gladly spread the message that will make all people as well as ourselves richer in goods and services than the biggest speculator or collector living today can imagine.

fraternally yours,
 Monroe Russack

John Crump has produced a good text for the Discussion Bulletin (USA) of January 1989. It cannot be belittled for some comments I take the liberty of doing.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ACTION

Nowadays the revolutionaries see easily the impossibility to reach a compromise with the rotten bourgeois world. Instead Marx thought that a young bourgeois democracy was conditionable and able to evolve in proletariat's favour. He was mistaken, but for that epoch we can also concede him the indefinite extenuating proof (tolerance).

Only in the minor works, of contingent value, Marx considered the political action able to hasten the economic process; he considered the human subjectivity able to subdue the objectivity of the mercantile laws. Instead in the most important works, destined to last for their value, he speaks in all other terms. Here he admittes the sole economic function to be decisive for the revolution. Crump's text seems to consider insufficiently this economic analysis of Marx.

THE FIRST COMMUNIST PHASE ASSUMPTED BY MARX

Marx considered the conquer of the proletarian power within realistic times and risked previsions on future possibilities. He proposed a transitional period to the higher communism, still influenced by the private right. In such a way Marx admitted how much his epoch was backward for the communism and here he marked himself differently from any kind of utopism.

The revolutionary viewpoint of Marx is still current: the new society will be deeply conditioned by the old one, the communism is destined to suffer all the deep injuries caused by the capitalist hell.

Only a posteriori it has been possible to establish how much the transitional hypothesis of Marx was weak: today it appears irrimediably exceeded, impossible. But I seem excessive to insist on such limits: indeed it hits more the man than the epoch producing him.

WEST AND RUSSIA, MARX AND LENIN

Let me argue ab absurdo. In the western countries the revolutionary transition proposed by Marx could not be considered in a pessimist way. A police system would not have been necessary, given the availability of consumer goods for all the people. Certainly it would have been wholly different from the "russian communism". In that oriental world the police system was and is necessary to control the men in front of the scarcity of goods. Therefore the conclusions are necessarily different for different material conditions. They were represented also by different viewpoints, or better, antithetical viewpoints; they were represented by Marx and Lenin. It cannot be denied by occasional agreements between them.

SIMULTANEITY OF THE REVOLUTIONS

It is true that Marx and Engels spoke of a proletarian revolution immediately after the bourgeois one within the Germany. But they posed a necessary condition: the german proletarian revolution had to be simultaneous to the

english one. Marx and Engels considered England mature for the socialist revolution. Both the theoreticians supported the communism on the sole materialist base (developed productive forces). From this viewpoint it is unimportant if they were mistaken to define the historic moment of the revolutionary maturity.

for the councils' communism
Tiziano Galante

NOTE: Mike Kolhoff's "The Call for an American Federation" in DB35 produced four responses to date--rather more than most DB articles. I have arranged them here according to the level of intensity. All were negative, and one would have to assume that if there are any supporters of an American anarchist federation reading the DB, they don't feel like applauding the idea publicly. In the first, Bruce Allen, drawing on his experiences with two anarchist federations of the past and on some years of involvement with Strike, the closest thing to a national publication that anarchists have had in recent years, arrives at some pessimistic conclusions about both an anarchist federation and the anarchist movement itself. Next, Mike Gunderloy provides a relatively dispassionate review of the facts in this most recent attempt at creating a new American federation. The DB was embroiled in the last two--a letter by Fifth Estate and an article by Bob Black. (to be continued)

Friends,

As an ex-member of a defunct absurdity which was called the Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation and as a founder of the ill-fated but noble-intentioned Anarchist Federation of North America and as a mainstay of STRIKE! until its demise in the spring of 1989, I read Mike Kolhoff's call for an American federation with exasperation and a renewed conviction that my decision to break ranks with the anarchist movement some years ago was clearly "correct." Nothing about the "movement" has changed over the past 10 or 15 years nor is there any reason to think it will any time soon.

Mike, spare yourself a lot of misery and frustration by abandoning this exercise in futility. The road to revolutionary change lies outside North America's minuscule and confused anarchist ghetto.

Best wishes,
Bruce Allen

Comrade Bulleteers:

As most of you know, I've been involved with DB for a number of years. Most of my contributions have tried to address ideas of interest to third-force socialists, despite my own position as an anarchist. In the wake of Mike Kolhoff's "The Call For an American Federation" (DB35), though, I find it necessary to drag an anarchist movement (and I use the term very loosely -- insofar as there is a movement, it isn't anarchist, and vice versa) debate into these pages. I trust those who know me will forgive me.

Reading Kolhoff's piece, I now know how some people have felt about internal schisms within the ranks of the socialists. The unjustified slurs against comrades, the power grabs, the revision of history, the substitution of rhetoric for reason...they're all there. Kolhoff's view of the anarchist milieu is not only wrong, it is dangerous. If Kolhoff has his way, we will be presented with another forum for the power freaks within the milieu to play their little political games, attempting to drown out the voices of those who disagree with them over fundamental matters of strategy, tactics, and ethics.

The "growing call" for an all-inclusive anarchist organization in fact comes from very few voices. The loudest of these voices belong to the RABL (a group of violence-glorifying youth organizers in Minneapolis), the RSL (ex-Leninist ex-Trotskyites primarily in New York and Detroit, widely viewed as Marxist infiltrators), a handful of the people who have gotten off on the power trip of planning the annual anarchist gatherings, and now Kolhoff himself. In opposition to this, there have been continued calls from a much wider spectrum of anarchists for local organizing and stronger local groups to precede any attempt at a national federation -- a very different thing from an organization.

Kolhoff's historical overview of the development of anarchism in this country is ludicrous. I would hazard a guess that no more than 1% of North American anarchists have read either Stirner or the Situationists. In any case, the major currents in the anarchist milieu these days are the socialist, syndicalist and communist ones -- judging, at least, by the relative absence of capitalists and individualists at the gatherings I've been to. I can only conjecture why he paints this picture of the individualist juggernaut. Perhaps he is searching for a scapegoat.

Nor can I account for his blind hatred of THE FIFTH ESTATE -- an exceptionally intelligent and perceptive anarchist paper which, contrary to his slurs, has been open to a variety of viewpoints in

recent years, even from those (such as myself) who disagree with some of their theory. Yes, it does tend to carry articles leaning in one particular direction, and yes, it is critical of the tendency to organize for the sake of organizing. But what is this nonsense about an overarching organization refusing to "tolerate" such a focused point of view? Are we to set up anarchist thought-police, to make sure the movement follows a correct line?

Further, THE FIFTH ESTATE does indeed offer assistance to building a viable anarchist movement (let us eschew the overly broad pop-fronting of "antiauthoritarian") -- from the bottom up, rather than trying to impose it from the top down. No one who has read their paper can be blind to the strong local organization they've participated in opposing the garbage incinerator in town, for example. Those of us who have resisted the calls for an overall organization are not simply proponents of the theory that anarchy equals chaos (a slur historically used by those desiring to denigrate the whole idea of anarchy). What I (and they) refuse to endorse is some mystical organization that will be imposed from above and unite us -- as SRAF, the ACF, the NAAN, and other past failures were intended to do.

As to where people can go for information about anarchism in the absence of an all-inclusive organization: there are plenty of large-circulation papers around which provide an introduction: KICK IT OVER, ANARCHY, THE FIFTH ESTATE, and even FACTSHEET FIVE among them. And there are dozens of groups anxious to take new members in, without the fear of police infiltrators which seems to run at its highest in the Bay Area, where Kolhoff hails from. What does he imagine a large organization could offer to do better than this? Will its paper find its way into "the B. Dalton bookstore down at the mall"? I doubt it. More likely it will be another low-circulation, high-budget drain on the milieu, working to prevent local groups from strengthening themselves at the roots, where it counts.

I've wasted enough of our time and space on this matter. Fortunately for the anarchists, I think that there will be enough cool heads at the San Francisco gathering to prevent any large organization from taking over the milieu. If I'm wrong about this, I guess you can look for me in the numbers of those first to be purged from the movement.

Cheers,
Mike Gunderloy, 6 Arizona Ave., Rensselaer, NY 12144-4502.

NOTE continued: Readers will observe that in the letter below E.B. Maple takes the DB to task for publishing what he regards as a mendacious attack on Fifth Estate (FE). Although FE has since received a handsome apology from Kolhoff, it asks that the letter be published anyhow to clear up questions that may remain in readers' minds. I can understand Maple's frustration at having to set the record straight and to defend his publication. The problem is that what he sees as "stupid, self serving" doesn't necessarily appear that way to others

who don't have the facts at their disposal. For DB to refuse publication to "The Call..." because of a reference to Fifth Estate would lay us open to a charge of censoring articles.

In fact, that is just what Bob Black did when I returned his article, "The Call of the Wild: Revealing (by Reviling) Michael Kolhoff" (published below), asking him to make changes because "...along with your very reasonable arguments against Mike Kolhoff's 'Call for an American Federation,' including both the anarchist organization he advocates and his understanding of individualism, you comment on his motives, his personality, the level of his intelligence, and other personal qualities he either possesses or lacks." In his reply Bob Black refused to change the letter. Citing the DB's policy of pasting up letters without editing them, Black suggested that I "start pasting the lambasting" but expressed his willingness to let me do my own dirty work as long as I inserted a BLEEP at every deletion. Bleeping doesn't work very well on this sort of article, but I will do my best. If Mike Kolhoff wishes to reply in kind, he is welcome to do so, subject to the DB deletion [a word I prefer to censorship] of personal attacks. It would be thoughtful if he would pre-bleep personal comments.

To the best of my ability I have removed personal attacks on Kolhoff and others. The number before the bleep indicates the number of words excised. I am willing to forward requests for the unexpurgated text to Bob Black.

fg

To the Discussion Bulletin:

It certainly is no secret that the Fifth Estate newspaper has opposed the creation of a national anarchist organization, feeling as we do that such a formation would function to hinder the development of a genuine anti-authoritarian movement. Such North American groupings in the past, and presently in Europe, are the bureaucratic play-pens for those enchanted with the trappings of power: titles, offices, resolutions, programs, rules, etc. In other words, people who would do best as operatives in the Leninist movement.

This is our opinion, and nothing more, something we've thought about and considered for a long time. But how does disagreement with this view allow you to use your paper to publish a vehement slander of us which accuses us of everything except child molestation? We don't know who this Mike Kolhoff is, but he's obviously got a big enough bug up his ass about us to resort to the weirdist of charges: "Stirnerism"? "Individualist journal"? "One ten-dancy (sic) has domination"? What's this guy talking about? Has he ever read our paper? Is he confusing us with The Match?

And why did you allow him to present some stupid, self-serving quote in such a manner as it appears as though it came from our pages?

The Fifth Estate has always advocated and continues to practice communal solidarity in the way we run our internal affairs, the method by which we fight the state and capital, and in our vi-

sion of a new society. Kolhoff accuses us of having an "incredibly divisive nature" to our publishing efforts because we refuse to ride on the hobby horse of people (a minority at that) who can't imagine functioning as anarchists without being submerged into some official organization.

Kolhoff's remarks are really too uninformed and mean-spirited to spend much time on. If anyone who is not familiar with our paper would like a ~~sample~~ copy, please drop us a card and we'll send you one. See you in San Francisco.

For Anarchy, not anarchism,

E.B. Maple
E.B. Maple

THE FIFTH ESTATE

P.O. BOX 02548

DETROIT, MI. 48202 U.S.A.

THE CALL OF THE WILD:
REVEALING (BY REVILING) MICHAEL KOLHOFF

Behold Michael Kolhoff, the latest leftist world-saver on the anarchist scene. He hears voices, and they of course say what he wants to hear. He wants to hear a "growing call" for an "all-inclusive" (you must enlist) yet dogmatic (you must agree) Anarchist Church. He aspires to turn the 1989 anarchist gathering in San Francisco into an anarcho-fundamentalist constitutional convention. His thinly veiled threats against the Fifth Estate are designed to discourage the attendance of the unorthodox. 251 BLEEE

Kolhoff's anti-American self-hatred estranges him from the working class as well as his own ideological heritage. With no idea where he's coming from, no wonder he hasn't the foggiest where he's going or why nobody else is going along with him. "If they had been literate," he conjectures, "the pioneers" would have relished the writings of Warren, Tucker and Thoreau when they weren't busy butchering Indians. If he were literate he'd know most of them were too, more often than not without the benefit of compulsory and/or state schooling, a detail you'd think an anarchist might find interesting if the anarchist were interested in thinking. As Joe Braun explained in Black Eye, nothing was more foreign to the native American anarchists than colonialism and imperialism. With anachronism born of ignorance Kolhoff ascribes "rugged individualism" to the Founding Fathers although even the word "individualism" didn't enter the language until 1827. Of course it's easier to live in the past, as Kolhoff does, if you know nothing about it.

Not that Kolhoff's ignorance is confined to general history: it extends to the history of anarchism itself. He speaks of "anarchist theory from the earliest writings of Proudhon." Proudhon's earliest writings weren't anarchist; more important, the earliest anarchist writing is by William Godwin, the kind of "individualist" Kolhoff denounces. Kolhoff approves Proudhon, opposes Warren. Doesn't he know the "individualist" Warren is ideologically indistinguishable from the "mutualist" Proudhon? Doesn't he know that the "individualist" Tucker was the translator and first publisher of Proudhon's What Is Property? and System of Economic Contradictions? That Tucker defended the Haymarket anarchists when

the collectivist Most repudiated them, receiving for his gutlessness a horse-whipping from Emma Goldman? That the "individualist" Joe Labadie was a union activist? For Kolhoff all these isms are fossilized, but in the 19th century "individualists" like Tucker referred to themselves as socialists and interacted intellectually and practically with Fourierists, feminists, atheists, Marxists and all kinds of radicals. The collectivists Kolhoff venerates, like Goldman and Berkman, never anathematized individualists as he does, nor did they ever establish or enter any "all-inclusive North American organization."

"Individualist" is a Stalinist, not an anarchist epithet. Kolhoff defames historical "individualists" but blatantly hasn't read any of them. He speaks of Stirner's ideas "commingling freely" (this is bad?) with those of the Founding Fathers, which is funny since Stirner's ideas received not even a minimal American airing until the 1880's and his amorality is very much against the grain of the Protestant natural-rights moralism of the American radical tradition. Anarcho-leftists like Kolhoff's allies 7 BLEEP are the most conspicuous contemporary examples of this kind of blackwashed religiosity. But speaking, or rather misspeaking of Stirner, Kolhoff condemns as "Stirnerism in its purest form" the denial of "the need for ANY organization of ANY kind." Of course a Stirnerist, were there any, wouldn't espouse Stirnerism lest it inhibit his freedom of action. But Stirner wasn't against all organization. He favored a flexible "Union of Egoists" for mutual self-help for just so long (and no longer) as it suited any egoist to deal with it. The point is not the adequacy of this conception but the inaccuracy of Kolhoff's invective.

Individualist anarchism, according to Kolhoff, "died" upon contact with the Industrial Revolution. That's chronologically nonsense since Tucker, Spooner, Walker and friends were agitating in the thick of industrialism. If individualist anarchism "died" before World War I then collectivist anarchism died right after it. In both cases the tendencies didn't disappear but dwindled into invisibility. There was nothing exceptionally American about this; worldwide the upsurge in government repression and Communist Party pseudo-revolutionism marginalized the anarchists. Anarcho-syndicalists like Kolhoff mostly converted to Communism or Fascism. In Spain, the only important exception, the anarchist leadership, sitting atop the kind of "all-inclusive organization" Kolhoff calls for, were so far irresponsible to those they were formally answerable to that they entered the government and got their dazed followers to go along with that until it was too late. They had all the "guarantees" you could ask for, but if paper guarantees were enough the United States would be, in some sense, a free country.

Curious how our 1 BLEEP moralist Kolhoff selectively embraces Marxist might-makes-right determinism to dismiss his individualist enemies as has-been's even as he bemoans the same treatment (the silent treatment) meted out to his heroes. When it happens to his rivals it's the judgment of history from which there is no appeal. When it happens to his idols (or to him!) it's an Establishment conspiracy whose very repressiveness confirms the world-historical subversiveness of their dangerous doctrines. Believe it, man.

Kolhoff's history of anarchism recalls Mel Brooks' History of the World, but Brooks has a sense of humor where Kolhoff has only an axe to grind. Kolhoff is, to borrow a term of abuse from the historians, "present-minded." He writes to further a present-day program. At first glance it is a mystery why Kolhoff should bother to discredit individualist anarchism at all, since its contemporary exponents with rare exceptions play no part in what Kolhoff

considers to be the anarchist or anti-authoritarian movement. To find them you have to search out places like the Libertarian Party where Kolhoff wouldn't even think of looking. With the rarest of exceptions (Sam Konkin, Mike Hoy) the laissez-faire anarchists have no more interest in dialog with leftists like Kolhoff than he has in dialog with them. Why bother with them or their ancestors?

For one reason and one reason alone: to discredit unorthodox anarchists by assigning them an unsavory pedigree. Going Christianity one worse, he visits the sins of the fathers on somebody else's children. His critique of anarchist heterodoxy has all the intellectual content of saying "Yo mama!" to another schoolkid. It'd be diversionary bullshit even if it were true.

But it isn't true. According to Kolhoff, in the 1980's "individualistic anarchism, via France and the Situationists, should find a renaissance." Maybe it should and maybe it shouldn't, but it didn't. The situationists weren't anarchists, they were Marxists. Their political program was council communism, which is much closer to Kolhoff's own anarcho-syndicalism than it is to individualism. The Situationist International wasn't against organization, it was an organization. In all probability the French situationists knew nothing of American individualist anarchism. Their judgment on European collectivist anarchism was scathing enough:

The anarchists, who distinguish themselves explicitly from the rest of the workers' movement by their ideological conviction, reproduce this separation of competances among themselves; they provide a terrain favorable to informal domination over all anarchist organizations by propagandists and defenders of their ideology, specialists who are in general more mediocre the more their intellectual activity consists of the repetition of certain definitive truths. Ideological respect for unanimity of decision has on the whole been favorable to the uncontrolled authority, within the organization itself, of specialists in freedom; and revolutionary anarchism expects the same type of unanimity from the liberated population, obtained by the same means.

Thus spake Guy Debord. His correlation of orthodoxy with mediocrity within the anarchist movement is acute; The Match, The Seditious and Ideas & Action are illustrative. But plainly these are the views of a hostile critic, not an anarchist. Kolhoff's "neo-individualism" is Stalin-style turd-slinging without a vestige of reality. Calling communalists like the Fifth Estate and myself "neo-individualists" reincarnating 19th century anarcho-capitalism is even less true than Stalin calling Trotsky an agent of Wall Street and the Mikado, but the method is the same.

It is "not surprising," relates Kolhoff, that the resurgence of "individualism" corresponded to the reign of the "ignoble" Ronald Reagan. To paranoia Kolhoff adds narcissism. Because he grew up under Reagan he assigns to the Reagan incident apocalyptic importance, like the punk Chicken Littles who for eight years announced World War III for tomorrow -- and don't miss the Dead Kennedys gig the day after! Where are they now? Art school? Law school? Who knows? Reagan is the "most ignoble president" because Kolhoff doesn't know about the rest of them. One anarchist thought McKinley, for instance was so ignoble that he murdered him. Kolhoff should investigate the likes (or dislikes) of Andrew Johnson and Warren Harding before he

flatters himself prematurely on the uniquely ignoble coming-of-age he's gone through. Personalizing presidential oppression is a lapse into liberalism. By demonizing the person you validate the office . . . the irresistible implication is that a good king would be different. I've watched presidents, like anarcho-militants, come and go. Personalities are secondary. They have a job to do and they do it.

53 BLEEP

I come to bury Kolhoff-ing and -puffing, not to praise individualism, Stirnerism, neo-individualism, situationism or even my glorious self. I am less concerned to vindicate their honor than to check an ugly, stupid style and substance of doctrinal harangue.

110 BLEEP

The real import of an idiotic tag like "neo-individualism" is -- again, in the Stalinist tradition -- to divide a universe of discourse into Good/Bad, Us/Them. The only thing Kolhoff's targeted enemies have in common is that they don't agree with him. That they might, for all he knows, disagree even more profoundly with each other does not concern him. Except for avoiding the terminology his classically Stalinist strategy is to exhume the residuary category of "objectively counter-revolutionary," or, as Jesus said, he who is not with Me is against Me.

An example of the kind of fraudulent tactics to be rendered painful is this quotation recounted by Kolhoff: "Organization itself is evil in that it subjugates the individual ego to the collective will of the group. It suppresses the minority in favor of the majority." Appearing, as it does, in quotation marks, the naive reader, unversed in the ways of anarcho-Stalinism might assume that Kolhoff is quoting some unnamed representative spokesman for the viewpoint he disagrees with. Not so. If this is a real quotation I will, upon submission of documentary proof, eat my words (viz., a copy of my book The Abolition of Work and Other Essays, which is a bellyful).

13 BLEEP

The allusion to the "individual ego" is intended to make the connection with "Stirnerism," unfortunately Kolhoff, having never read Stirner doesn't realize that, as an amoralist, Stirner or any Stirnerist wouldn't speak of anything as "evil." Checkmate, 1 BLEEP

16 BLEEP

Kolhoff

has an imaginary playmate, Joe Normal who for some reason wants to know about anarchism -- perhaps he was thinking of voting and wanted to make sure that he should -- but finds only "lies" about deceased foreigners in the public library. Kolhoff insists that only a centralized authoritative organization can give Joe the answers he craves. So who's responsible for him even asking the questions? A chance encounter, a history course, a sermon at a punk show, it might be anything. Probably though it's one of the countless mini-publications of the marginals milieu which Joe is welcome to query, of course, for further details. Indeed, how did Kolhoff become an anarchist and why isn't that a good way for others to get into it?

Kolhoff remarks correctly that anarchist directories are not available at Dalton's. Two of them, however, came out without the benefit of any organization -- one in his adopted home San Francisco, the other in Vienna. I have seen publications out of Australia and elsewhere with extensive contact listings also. I am unaware of any anarchist organization which has done as

much, or indeed done anything. If his dream-organization came into being, its directory, its publication would not be available at Dalton's either. So just exactly what is it good for?

Not for disseminating ideas. The motley of grouplets and publications and posterists do that already, as best they can. In calling for an anarcho-workerist federation Kolhoff displays his ignorance of the last time this was tried, in the mid-1970's, it was called the Anarchist Communist Federation. Long ago I saw, via friends, its astoundingly turgid internal discussion disputations. The only quasi-practical thing the ACF ever did was found the newspaper Strike. I don't care for the rag, but it flourishes to this day as an exemplary refutation of the organizationalism of its producers. At some point practice trumped doctrine and they noticed that the organizational affiliation only interfered with their project. To this day, burned-out vets of the ACF quarrel publicly — more than ten years after — about custody over a typewriter. If this is how Kolhoff wants to experience the 21st Century he can go right ahead but if he expects to have much company he thinks anarchists are even stupider than I do.

It should be self-evident why, from a revolutionary point of view, one hundred publications with a circulation of one thousand are one hundred times better than one publication with a circulation of one hundred thousand. We war with an authoritarian system. It seeks to centralize and organize its enemies -- through political parties, trade unions, in any way -- so as to monitor and manage them. It creates leaders and stars to simplify its control of incomplete, thus self-defeating dissent. Only a hydra-headed acephalous revolutionary current is too decentralized, dispersed and unpredictable to be brought to heel. By all means let Kolhoff coagulate the authoritarian right wing of anti-authoritarianism. Then the police will know where to find them and we will know what to avoid. The workerist pimple will come to a head to burst or be squeezed. To quote Ken Knabb (who surpassed himself this time) the revolution will then be just where we want it: out of control.



Bob Black

Come Dungeons Dark: The Life and Times of Guy Aldred, Glasgow Anarchist by John Taylor Caldwell, (Luath Press Ltd., Barr, Ayrshire, 1988) 290pp. [for U.S. readers \$13, postpaid, from Northern Herald Books, 6 Lillian Street, Bradford BD4 9LP England; all others £6.95 + 60p postage from either Luath or Northern Herald]

In outline, Come Dungeons Dark is divided into three books: "The Herald of Revolt," an account of Aldred's evolution towards anti-parliamentary socialism from boy-preacher through freethought and state socialism to anarchism; "The Steelbound Coffin," the story of war resistance during the First World War and Aldred's active part in this; and "The Red Evangel," covering the post-1918 period including the formation and early years of the Antiparliamentary Communist Federation, the campaigns for free speech and for Spain in the thirties, details of Bakunin and Strickland Presses and the papers and pamphlets they produced, along with much else. The book is illustrated with a number of salient photographs.

The book is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly it gives an outline of Aldred's life and ideas for a new generation of comrades who either may know nothing of him or only of "the curious figure of some importance" of John Quail's Lost History.

Initially the book draws on Aldred's earlier autobiographical works. Though these are available to a small number of researchers and older comrades, they are now--especially No Traitor's Gait--virtually unobtainable by a wider audience and it is good to see this autobiographical detail presented to fresh readers. To these works Caldwell has added the fruits of his own researches, and perhaps most importantly, (a) the accumulated insights and wisdom passed on to him by the older generation of Glasgow comrades who were familiar with the anarchist movement in Glasgow stretching beyond Aldred to Socialist League days; and (b) Caldwell's own long experience of the movement.

It should be noted that the book is an amalgam of two larger works--Come Dungeons Dark and The Red Evangel. While some detail and a little continuity have been lost, the book has benefited from the editing and the rewrite by allowing Caldwell's gifts as a writer to blossom forth. The well-written narrative is a delight to read. This is not an impartial and filleted academic treatise but the product, increasingly rare, of the active and committed self-taught socialist who earnestly seeks to pass on his knowledge and experience to other socialists.

Another reason for the book's importance is that it documents not only the life of Aldred but also, through his life, the history of the antiparliamentary movement and its ideas. As Caldwell notes in his foreword: "He persistently represented an aspect of left-wing thought which had been--and still is--crushed off stage by the parliamentary socialism of the Labour Party and Independent Labour Party and by the dictatorial centralism of the Communist party.... A reason for writing the 'life' of Guy Aldred is that it articulates ideas that have become

incoherent and corrupted..."

These ideas, the ideas of anti-parliamentary communism, were "crushed off stage" in the post-1920 period. Prior to that they were very much centre stage in what we call the communist or rebel movement emerging prior to and during the First World War. Anti-parliamentarism at this time has to be viewed in the context of a burgeoning communist movement. One of the defining features of pre-1920 communism--before the CPGB became the arbiter of all things 'communist'--was its anti-parliamentary nature. It was centred on a developing set of ideas shared by many 'unaffiliated' and non-sectarian Marxists and anarchists, including the concept of workers' committees and councils seizing the means of production; and as a necessary corollary of these, the importance of direct action and anti-parliamentary agitation.

This body of ideas grew out of the interaction of rebel socialist and the 'dissident' or 'unofficial' working class movements of the day, from syndicalism onwards, and also the war resisters' struggle which Caldwell documents. The importance of Aldred is that he sought to clarify and articulate these ideas at a key period. In countless writings and debates and by his action the ideas of industrial unionism, Marxism, anarchism and various direct action philosophies were put to the test. His papers at this time, the Herald of Revolt and The Spur, were an important forum--not the only forum but the most important on the libertarian left--where these ideas were expressed and threshed out. This was not an armchair, solely intellectual exercise. The comrades at this time were under fire--Aldred, as Caldwell documents, serving long periods in jail--and they had to act. The only hope was to make more rebels, and, in Aldred's words, to develop "a rebel army of the night toiling towards the dawn." The dawn did not arrive, but for future toilers in this army it is important to discover the libertarian tradition in British Communism and Aldred's part in developing it. Caldwell's book should help in this.

The book also charts the struggles by Aldred and his fellow workers including Caldwell to keep the anti-parliamentary movement and its ideas alive against all odds. In some ways this is the most important and revealing part of the book. It is so in large part because it is based on Caldwell's own personal experience in the movement. Possessing a good memory and unusual skill as a writer, he can really bring these years to life. Through his account we can see behind the public meetings and the publications circulated by the Bakunin and Strickland presses to the people who gave their lives to the movement. There is an interesting detail about the 'family unit' of Aldred, Caldwell, Jenny Patrick, and Ethel MacDonald, and how they worked and kept the Strickland Press going through mounting difficulties. Despite, for example, the Scottish Typographical Association's ban on the press because it employed women, they produced The Word and a stream of pamphlets and books.

There is also much new information on Aldred in these pages, including full details of his election campaigns (for which Caldwell acted as election agent) and the anti-parliamentary strategy behind them, the campaign in support of the Spanish anarchists, and the free speech battle for Glasgow Green.

The book does contain a few typographical and indeed factual errors, but these are minor. In my judgement, the book is essential reading for anyone wanting to understand both the libertarian communist movement in Great Britain and one of its most popular thinkers and activists. Before concluding, however, a little more should be said about Caldwell. The role of historian was thrust upon him by circumstances--for there was simply no one else left to write the history. Now we have this book, which perhaps represents Caldwell's last attempt to pass on the anti-parliamentary legacy to a new generation. Even so, we hope we hope it will not be his last work, for as Caldwell wrote in his first headline after Aldred's death: "THE WORD CARRIES ON!"

Bob Jones

REVIEW

From Riot to Insurrection: Analysis for an Anarchist Perspective against Post-Industrial Capitalism by Alfred Bonanno. (Elephant Editions, BM Elephant, London WC1N 3XX, England, 1988) 59pp. [\$2 from Libertarian Book Club, 339 Lafayette St., Room 202, New York, NY 10012]

From Riot to Insurrection was written as an Anarchists' guide to the sociology of contemporary capitalism. Its principal point is that because of changes in production over the past twenty years many of the givens that revolutionaries have assumed are no longer true. The most important of these is the idea that the industrial workers will be the revolutionary class that will effect the next social change and that the force creating the class consciousness necessary to cause our class to act will unemployment and its attendant human misery.

Examining modern capitalism, Bonanno finds (a) that the industrial working class has been dispersed worldwide by the transfer of production to third world countries and (b) that jobs in the old industrial centers have been increasingly in the service sector or non-existent. At the same time production when it is carried on in the old industrial centers uses computerized/robotized factories, manned by technicians and engineers who have replaced the old industrial working class.

These changes in production have brought with them a profound change in the proletariat. Bonanno uses the terms "included" and "excluded" to denote the division between the beneficiaries and victims of capitalism in its "post-industrial" phase. The included are--besides the capitalist class itself--the technicians, engineers, managers, corporate bureaucrats, and the like. The excluded are low-paid service workers, casual laborers (temporaries as in Manpower), displaced un- or under-employed workers and their children--those who because of circumstances or temperament are unable to obtain the education needed to be among the included. These differences in education and experience are creating a widening chasm of communication, the included and excluded no longer speaking the same language.

Bonanno sees capitalism as reaching for a new era of social peace.

Production has been removed from Gary, Youngstown, Detroit, and the other former concentrations of industrial workers that were once the centers of class warfare. They have been spread out to the third world where isolation and state repression prevent the critical mass needed for worker, shop floor insurrections. At the same time the excluded in their present state are capable of being stroked and provided with the minimum that makes existence possible. Meanwhile capitalism is putting on a human face and embracing pro-life, pro-environment, and other "good" causes

But the resulting social peace, Bonanno argues, is doomed by the explosive rage of the "excluded." Basic to this rage is their unwillingness to accept the constraints on their consumption imposed by their new status. It is the hopelessness of this strata of the proletariat that fuels the mindless ghetto riots in the urban centers of the old industrial nations, especially Britain (U.S. readers can think in terms of Miami and even Grand Rapids this spring).

Less clear and less plausible is Bonanno's recipe for transforming these urban riots into the anti-capitalist insurrections he envisions. His comments in this regard amount to little more than a conclusion that the "informal anarchist organizations are the most capable of intervening effectively in urban riots because they can formulate demands that are in keeping with the needs and wants of the excluded. Interestingly, this reader, at least, inferred that Bonanno sees the anarchists as members of the "included" strata. But with their insights and informal organizations they will be in a position to influence the rioters and provide them with an anti-capitalist, if not revolutionary, focus.

In my estimation the pamphlet is well worth the price if only for Bonanno's theories about the causes of urban riots and the evolution of the working class.

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(Cont'd from p. 2)

Wage System, and All Rights (P) Reserved are in the process of being revised. Readers who send two dollars will receive the first two immediately and the other four when they are issued. IWW, P.O. Box 85635, Station F. Vancouver, BC V5N 5K3 Canada.

Airlines: The Struggle Within This four-page leaflet issued by the Committee for Socialist Union, reviews some less well-known facts about the airlines in general and Eastern in particular. It comes to a typically DeLeonist solution to air transportation problem calling on workers to abandon capitalist unionism and to investigate the SIU program. For copies write to Committee for Socialist Union, P.O. Box 303, Camden, NJ 08101 .

(In Place of a) Syndicalist Bulletin This fourteen-page brochure was published by members of a group of British syndicalists who maintain their existence separate from the Direct Action Movement (DAM), the British affiliate of the International Workers Association (IWA). Besides a discussion among members on the feasibility of continued publication of their Bulletin, this issue includes the

DISCUSSION BULLETIN
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Subtitled "Critique , Programme, Struggle Organization, International Party, for the Abolishment of Wage labour, it seems to hold views typical of left communist groups. 25p/\$.50 [perhaps a dollar postpaid U.S.] from A.V. Vida Natural/ Apartado, Correos 25, 27080 Lugo, Spain.

The Red Menace is a new publication whose writers "want to contribute to this communist movement by encouraging such things as the coordination of different struggles and the self-organization our class outside the control of unions and political parties (including the so-called 'revolutionary' parties)." Four pages, 8 1/2 by 11, free from BM Wild, London WC1N 3XX, England.

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